



**New Mexico VA Health Care System  
Department of Veterans Affairs**

## News Release

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For immediate release:  
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### Call for Entries for 2009 VA Creative Arts Festival

ALBUQUERQUE - All talented veterans enrolled in the New Mexico VA Health Care System (NMVAHCS) are encouraged to participate in the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual NMVAHCS Creative Arts Festival, March 4-5, 2009 at the Raymond G. Murphy VA Medical Center, 1501 San Pedro Drive SE in Albuquerque. Completed applications and entries are due Friday, February 27, 2009 by 5 p.m.

The NMVAHCS and Veterans Affairs (VA) medical facilities nationwide use the creative arts as one form of rehabilitative treatment to help veterans recover from and cope with physical and emotional disabilities. Each year, veterans treated at VA medical centers compete in a local creative arts contest. The local competition includes 50 art categories that range from oil painting to leatherwork to paint-by-number kits. There are also 120 categories pertaining to all aspects of music, dance, drama and creative writing. The creative writing division includes original works in poetry, essay, short story and personal experience writing. The competition recognizes the progress and recovery made through arts therapy, and raises the visibility of the creative achievements of our nation's veterans.

New Mexico veterans are among the most talented in the country. In 2008, winners of the NMVAHCS festival won 15 medals at the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival, placing NM in the top 5 of VA Medical Centers nationwide. 4 NM Gold Medal winners received all expense paid trips to the national festival in Riverside, California. The National Veterans Creative Arts Festival is the culmination of talent competitions for veterans treated throughout the VA national health care system.

The Visual Arts component of the NMVAHCS 2009 Creative Arts Festival will be held on Wednesday, March 4, 2009 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the Recreation Hall (Building 2) at the Raymond G. Murphy VA Medical Center. The Performing Arts component will be held on Thursday, March 5, 2009 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. in the Education Auditorium (Building 39). All first place category winners will be entered into the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival which will be held October 5-11, 2009 in San Antonio, Texas.

The festival is open to all veterans receiving care at VA medical facilities. Enrolled veterans seeking more information are invited to attend pre-festival orientation meetings. Local organizers and past participants will gather on Tuesday, February 3, 2009 from 6 to 7 p.m. and again on Thursday, February 5, 2009 from noon to 1 p.m. to talk about the different categories and assist with applications. Both orientation meetings will take place in the Recreation Hall.

Applications may be picked up at the Recreation Hall Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. To request an application by mail, call Cathy Williams at 505-265-1711 ext. 2469 or Jerry Perea at 265-1711, ext. 4208. Veterans can also call toll free at 1-800-465-8262, ext. 2469 or 4208. Completed applications and entries must be delivered to the Recreation Hall on Friday, February 27, 2009 by 5 p.m.

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